REPORT OF THE

ELEMENTARY ART EDUCATION COMMITTEE

TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

JUNE 1990

91-00235/

June 21, 1990

Honourable Paul Connolly
Minister of Education
Shaw Building
Charlottetown, P.E.I.

Dear Mr. Connolly;

The Elementary Art Education Committee was formed as a response to concerns, proposals, and recommendations from various sources, all of which suggested that more art instruction in the elementary classrooms of the province was necessary.

With the submission of this report, we hope that the committee has accomplished the task asked of it. We have observed the present state of art in the elementary schools and assessed the proposals. Recommendations will be made which we feel would improve the teaching of art in the elementary classrooms of Prince Edward Island.

Respectfully submitted,

William Bartlett

Terry Dunton Stevenson

Lloyd Mallard

Rosemary Mathis

Roger Moore

LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

William Bartlett	Music and Art Consultant Grades 1-12 Department of Education
Terry Dunton Stevenson	Island Artist and Art Teacher Charlottetown
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Rosemary U. Mathis	Art Teacher Birchwood Junior High School Charlottetown
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INTRODUCTION AND MANDATE

The Elementary Art Education Committee met first in September, 1988. The committee had been formed by the Minister of Education at the time, the Honourable Betty Jean Brown, in answer to a growing concern for the status of art education in the schools of our province.

A demonstration of this concern was expressed in a presentation to the Minister of Education by some members of the Council of the Arts of Prince Edward Island. A part of this presentation was a proposal that more art be taught in the elementary schools of the province and that a program in art be established which would be universally available to students in our elementary schools.

At about the same time, a study sponsored jointly by the provincial and federal governments was examining the economic impact of the arts on Prince Edward Island. Included in this study, written by John Eldon Green, were proposals which were specific to art education.

The committee was asked to examine these two reports and to assess the desirability and the feasibility of implementing the recommendations made.

The elements of art which were necessary to include in an appropriate art program at the elementary level were to be identified.

The committee was also to suggest ways to improve the existing art course, make better use of resources available, and to better integrate art into the curriculum.

As well, we were to consult with the Elementary Education Committee, which was meeting at the time. The Elementary Art Education Committee was to provide that committee with its recommendations. In the course of this consultation, it became clear that the Elementary Art Education Committee had to await the conclusions and the

recommendations of the Elementary Education Committee, for that committee was to make recommendations on the entire curriculum, of which art is a part.

The Elementary Education Committee presented its report to the Minister in February, 1990. Included in the report are time guidelines and comments which affect the importance and presentation of art in the curriculum. As well, considerable time was spent by that committee considering the integration of subjects taught at the elementary level. The reader is advised to consider the report of the Elementary Education Committee while studying this report.

ELEMENTS NECESSARY FOR APPROPRIATE ART EDUCATION

To ensure an appropriate art education in the schools, the following four components will be present. All must be represented and no one component is necessarily more or less important than any other. Aesthetic awareness might be considered to indicate the direction in which the other components should proceed. But all four are to a great extent interactive and each supports and enhances the others.

AESTHETIC AWARENESS

Students will be encouraged to use their senses to perceive and appreciate natural and man-made aspects of their visual environment. Involvement in many perceptual art experiences will lead to the mental categorization of experiences and the formulation of art concepts.

One of the purposes in teaching art should be the development of the child's visual awareness. Exposure alone to a variety of experiences will not necessarily enable the child to become visually aware of elements of art. The child must be helped to see this visual environment. Seeing involves perceiving the qualities of line, shape, form, colour, texture, space, and pattern found in natural and man-made forms.

ART EXPRESSION

The opportunity for *creative and thoughtful* art expression is one of the primary objectives of art education and one of the best reasons for the existence of art in the curriculum. Learning which takes place as a result of creative experiences has a great impact upon a child's development through self-discovery.

Students will be involved in the making of works of art using various materials and processes. The techniques of drawing and painting, learning the primary colours, and fundamentals of 3-dimensional sculpture are examples of the tools of art, which are as essential to the art

student as is adequate vocabulary to a student writing an essay. This visual vocabulary allows the students to express their unique thoughts and ideas. From the earliest years onward, experiences in art demand increasingly complex techniques, allowing students to develop progressively more advanced visual thinking.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Art experiences should lead to a recognizable growth in motor art skills, which is the ability to handle the materials and equipment of art. The development of such skills enables students to express their ideas in increasingly greater detail and clarity.

Appropriate art education will enable children's motor art skills to keep pace with their intellectual development. Acquiring manipulative skills enables students to express themselves in art with greater confidence. As they mature, their manipulative skills improve and the images and symbols they draw become more sophisticated.

The ability to verbally express personal reactions to and critical evaluations of works of art grows as art concepts and design principles are acquired. Art terminology must be understood in order to respond verbally to works of art, to analyze works of art, and to express critical thoughts about works of art. This growth of verbal skills in discussion of aesthetic qualities is one of the benefits associated with appropriate art teaching.

CULTURAL AWARENESS

Art education will include a study of art in our society and of our artistic heritage. Students should also develop an understanding and appreciation of the artistic achievements of various cultures throughout the history of mankind and how these achievements have affected humanity.

Children should be helped to understand the correlation of their work in art to the work of artists in their community. The artist's view of our world must be made comprehensible to them. Interpretive experiences will

help children to realize that personal and individual artistic expressions are not the exception, but are normal reactions of individual thought processes.

Art is and has been an extremely important human activity, available for all to enjoy through personal involvement. The elementary art program will make children aware that art reflects humanity. Children should also be shown the relationship of art in the past to the life and culture of the people of the time. A respect and understanding of various historical and cultural differences may well be more easily understood through effective art teaching than by any other method.

REPORT ON ECONOMIC IMPACTS AND OPPORTUNITIES OF THE CULTURAL INDUSTRIES IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

The Elementary Art Education Committee was to assess the desirability and feasibility of the recommendations made in this report by John Eldon Green, commissioned jointly by the provincial and federal governments. Although the report was not concerned with education as a primary topic, little can be written about cultural influences without the mention of education. Thus, a section on education became a part of the report.

Proposals made by Green and comments on these proposals are as follows:

1) That the Department of Education implement a demonstration project to determine the benefits for school children on P.E.I. of an arts enriched curriculum using practising artists, as proposed by the Council of the Arts in October, 1986.

This proposal was conceived to determine the benefits to children of a curriculum somewhat richer in artistic experiences than would be encountered normally. The students in one school were to be given an arts-enriched curriculum while the students in a control school were to be taught without these extra arts experiences. The proposal was made to the Atlantic Project Fund of Canada Council and funding for the project was declined.

The benefits of extra exposure to the arts hardly have to be determined, for most people are aware and readily admit that advantages are to be found. The Elementary Education Committee has found that emphasis on the arts is routinely encountered in approved curricula from other provinces. Their suggestion that 5% of the curricular time be spent on each of art and music in the elementary years shows agreement with the increased arts exposure suggested by the 1986 proposal.

The members of this committee feel that the cost, in funding as well as in time and effort, might better be spent on the establishment of an art program which would benefit all students rather than the students of just one school, as suggested in the proposal to Canada Council.

2) That the Department of Education adopt for implementation the proposal for an Art Education program submitted to it in November, 1987, by the P.E.I. Council of the Arts..

The Green study did not evaluate the individual proposals submitted to the Department of Education by the Council of the Arts, but suggests that information received from several sectoral group meetings is consistent with the proposals in the Council of the Arts report.

Green states that, "Art education is as much education through art as education about art - equally concerned with method as with content." We agree with this statement; that this thought is generally believed may be shown by the name chosen by professional art educators in this country - the C.S.E.A. - the Canadian Society of Education through Art.

There is a reference in Green's report to the fear on the part of the Council of the Arts that art education will become diluted by the subdivision of available time among all of the arts subjects. It will be noted that the report of the Elementary Education Committee specifies equal and separate time for music and art.

The suggestions put forward in the Council of the Arts proposal will be dealt with as separate items and in a section devoted to that report.

3) That Holland College undertake a major external evaluation of its School of Visual Arts, extending to the relationship between SVA and the commercial design and photography programs.

This proposal is beyond the mandate of the Elementary Art Education Committee.

4) That the Department of Education and School Boards adopt an Artist-in-Residence program for schools which wish to participate.

If an Artist-in-Residence program is to be adopted, the program would be far more productive if it were adopted by schools with an art program already in place. We do not believe that the recommendation suggests that the Artist-in-Residence program be adopted in lieu of a curricular art program.

We believe that priority must be given to the establishing of an elementary art program in the schools. After that is done, the direction which the Department of Education and the School Boards wish to take may be more accurately and beneficially determined.

5) That consideration be given within the University of P.E.I. to an enriched art education component within its Bachelor of Education program.

Members of the committee support this recommendation. Green has identified one of the principal blocks to the establishment and teaching of art education in the elementary schools of the province.

Few of the teachers in the elementary schools of Prince Edward Island have had a course in the teaching of art. It is hardly likely that a teacher with no experience or training in a subject will be particularly inclined to teach this subject.

Compare this with the teaching of virtually every other subject taught in the schools. All teachers have taken 12 years of language arts, science, social studies or history, and mathematics, plus courses taken at the university level.

As a rule, those educated in the schools of the province have not had art presented to them in an organized way at any time in their own education. They are unlikely to encounter an art course at university. Is it any wonder that they are unable to present a logically conceived course to their own students?

The University of Prince Edward Island should be encouraged to enrich the art education component of its Bachelor of Education course and we will make a recommendation to that effect.

PROPOSAL BY PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND COUNCIL OF THE ARTS

Suggestions made by the Council of the Arts which are pertinent to this report may be summarized as follows:

1) That a visual arts consultant who is a specialist in art be appointed by the Department of Education;

2) That a full-time Visual Arts Co-ordinator be hired, outside the present pupil-teacher ratio, in each school unit. Each co-ordinator would be a specialist teacher in visual arts and would be experienced in the teaching of visual arts;

3) That the Department of Education provide each School Board with additional funding for a minimum of three years to implement the art program currently in use in the Moncton schools (N.B. School Unit #15). The funding would be used to employ Teaching Assistants who would have backgrounds in fine art or in education. These Teaching Assistants would receive training by the co-ordinators so that they could provide in-service to elementary school teachers on delivering the [art] program in their classrooms.

We do see the need for a structured approach to an art program, but we do not see that the structure, as suggested by the Council of the Arts, is necessarily the one to adopt.

In Prince Edward Island, programs are generally produced by specialists under the supervision of the Department of Education. As a result, the members of the committee feel that one of the keys to a successful art program in the province is the hiring of consultants at the school board level. These consultants could be expected to fulfil some of the functions which are recommended as necessary in the report of the Council of the Arts.

These consultants, who would be specialists experienced in the teaching of visual arts, would create, in consultation with the Department of Education, a program in art and a curriculum to be followed in that program. Instead of adopting an art program such as that suggested in the Council of the Arts report in reference to the Moncton program, it is our thought that the specialists employed in the units should be sufficiently experienced that they would be able to develop and maintain a program suitable for our province.

The program would be consistent with the thoughts on art programs expressed on pages 3 to 5, and would include those elements identified as essential to an art program. The curriculum would grow from the program and would be developed in such a way as to be consistent with the goals of education as expressed in the recent document, "A Philosophy of Education for Prince Edward Island," and the goals for education expressed in the Elementary Education Committee Report (February, 1990).

We believe that the elements of art education expressed earlier in this report are consistent with the goals of education in the two reports mentioned in the previous paragraph. In fact, many of the goals in those documents are primary to art instruction.

There is no doubt among the members of the committee that specialist consultants will be necessary if an art program is to be taught by classroom teachers. But we do not feel that five consultants - one per unit - is a realistic method of dividing the work load, since the units are so disparate in size. Although we consider that the province's elementary schools could be supervised by a minimum of three such consultants, it should be stressed that the work load might be more effectively managed with more art specialists.

If specialist consultants were to be employed in the units, concern about the necessity of a specialist consultant at the Department of Education level would be reduced. The impetus for an art program would come, as it does in other subjects, from the specialists in the units, working as a curriculum committee with a curriculum specialist from the Department of Education. At some

time, an art consultant who is a specialist in the teaching of art might be appointed by the Department of Education.

Instead of endorsing the recommendation for Teacher Assistants in the Council of the Arts report, we suggest that the role of the Teacher Assistants would better be filled by the experienced consultants. We consider that the contact between consultant and teachers is most important and might be the key to success or failure of a program.

We do agree with the expressed thought of the Council of the Arts report that, "Training general classroom teachers to deliver a complete art program for their particular grade level would give them the confidence and skills necessary to continue the program."

The members of the committee believe that art may be taught capably and confidently by classroom teachers, if those teachers are properly motivated and if they receive adequate in-service training. The classroom teachers must have continuing assistance from an experienced specialist on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As has been previously stated, the members of this committee consider that having specialist art consultants at the school board level is one of the keys to a successful art program for Prince Edward Island. Indeed, in this province, where we have no art specialists in any position whatsoever in our elementary system, the addition of art consultants is likely the entry point in the quest for an art program.

Recommendation #1

> We recommend that specialist art consultants be hired at the school board level.

As a preliminary step, consideration might be given to the establishment of a pilot program in which a specialist art consultant would be hired on a part-time basis, assigned to designated classrooms and teachers.

In the course of such a pilot, the consultant would develop a curriculum, in co-operation with a pilot curriculum committee which would be created to establish a curriculum for that pilot. Evaluation of the pilot should be assumed to be an integral task of the pilot team.

Recommendation #2

> A curriculum committee should be established to consider a suitable program for art in the elementary schools of Prince Edward Island. As a starting point, this committee should adopt the elements identified earlier in this report and which are considered essential to an art program.

To further direct the curriculum committee, recommendations are necessary regarding time allocation for art and for subject integration.

Recommendation #3

> In agreement with the recommendations of the Elementary Education Committee, we recommend that 5% of the curricular time be accepted as the minimum time for art instruction in Grades 1 to 6.

Recommendation #4

> We endorse the concept of subject integration as outlined by the Elementary Education Committee.

The suggestion that art should always be integrated must be questioned. While it is true that the use of art may complement almost all other subjects, the technique of art exists by and for itself, and must be learned prior to integration.

It is unfair to suggest that art exists only for integration with other subjects or for the use of other subjects. This is an opinion too often heard in our schools and offered without sufficient thought of the concepts of art. This opinion denies the existence of art for its own sake.

There must be art lessons taught--lessons for which the primary reason is the teaching of art. There are concepts in art just as there are in other subjects. And in art, as in other subjects, there is a hierarchical procedure which must be followed if the subject is to be taught correctly. The presentation of a concept, the practise of a skill, the presentation of art terminology, or some other aspect of art and art alone is to be presented in these lessons. In many cases these concepts and skills are not complicated and are easily learned.

After the conceptual steps have been presented to students, art may be integrated usefully and beneficially with other subjects in the elementary years. There is little doubt that if integration is to take place successfully, classroom teachers are in the best position to integrate art with other subjects.

If integration is to be pursued as outlined in the Elementary Education Committee report, then an art program taught by classroom teachers and supervised by visual art consultants could be developed into an effective integrative approach to a variety of subjects.

The Unit 3 Art Study, carried out as a Curriculum Committee Project and reported in June, 1988, found that 67% of the teachers surveyed felt that the adequacy of their art supplies could be described as fair or poor. No teachers described adequacy of art materials as excellent.

The inadequacy or absence of basic equipment and supplies in a classroom has an indisputably detrimental effect on the desire, if not the ability of an otherwise eager teacher to introduce art to a class. There must be an alleviation of this discouraging block to teacher initiative.

Recommendation #5

> A budget of $3. per pupil should be made available by the Department of Education to schools which teach an approved art program.

An approved art program will be one which implements the provincially-approved curriculum under the direction of an art consultant.

This funding is intended to provide equipment and supplies to the schools in the program. Funds intended to be spent on reference material for teachers and currently available under the New Authorization budget should not be affected by this additional allowance. The New Authorization budget for Art 1-6 is presently about $1,000 per year and would not be expected to change.

The annual budget of $1,000 allocated for Art 1-6 at present is all the funding which the art program receives from the Department of Education. The increase, which would only happen when schools and units adopted the approved art program, would be expected to be gradual. At

its maximum, the sum specified would amount to a small proportion of funding presently made for most other programs in the elementary curriculum.

Since it is not expected that texts would be specified for use in an art program in elementary schools, it seems reasonable that a strong argument might be made for the allotment of funding for equipment and supplies, since this, not textbooks, comprises the *material* of art. To date, the Department of Education has not funded equipment and supplies; schools must pay for these things out of the school budget provided by the unit. Thus, those teachers who wish to purchase art materials have had to vie with office expenses, rising duplication costs, and those other expenses normally met in the operation of schools.

The members of the committee feel that this lack of adequate funding is responsible, to an extent, for the difficulties met by those teachers who are attempting to offer their students some art instruction.

In this report we have identified one of the problems in art education in the province as the lack of teachers adequately trained to present an art program.

Recommendation #6

> The Faculty of Education of the University of Prince Edward Island should require a full credit in art education for graduation from its Bachelor of Education program.

We see such a credit being developed in co-operation with the art curriculum committee and the art consultants so that the course offered will assist those who will be asked to teach art in the elementary schools of Prince Edward Island.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation #1

We recommend that specialist art consultants be hired at the school board level.

Recommendation #2

A curriculum committee should be established to consider a suitable program for art in the elementary schools of Prince Edward Island. As a starting point, this committee should adopt the elements identified earlier in this report and which are considered essential to an art program.

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